

Nebraska

E-Commerce Training Programs



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**Compiled by
the Nebraska Rural Initiative,
the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, and
the Nebraska Information Technology Commission**

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Nebraska Electronic Main Street Program

<http://connecting.unl.edu>

Program Description:

Nebraska Electronic Main Street Program teaches business owners and managers how to use the World Wide Web for business expansion. It gives them an understanding of e-commerce and introduces them to the many business uses of the Internet. Through on-line instruction, participants determine the value of the Internet to their businesses. The course teaches them how to use a Web page to expand their markets, promote their businesses, and do business online. Learning the basics of promoting their Web site and developing an Internet marketing plan concludes the course. The team acquired the curriculum from Minnesota Extension and adapted it to Nebraska.

The principal goal of the Nebraska MainStreet Program is to help the state's small businesses compete in global markets by training individuals about the advantages of using electronic commerce.

The program will teach participants to:

- Take advantage of the multiple elements of electronic commerce. E-commerce is more than just the Internet. It includes electronic mail, private bulletin board systems, value-added networks, intranets and extranets. E-commerce takes advantage of every available means of communication technology including television, fax and telephone.
- Use the internet for business research to locate new markets and suppliers, look in on the competition and avoid being taken by online scams.
- Explore e-commerce web sites to study customer service techniques, and marketing and corporate/investor relations to determine if a web site is right for their business.
- Develop and manage a customer focused web site by selecting an internet host, registering an appropriate domain name and working with templates to create an online store.
- Develop a marketing program that will promote their web site effectively. Organize an Internet business strategy and incorporate it into their overall business plans.



The Nebraska Electronic Main Street Program has a secondary goal of strengthening and building partnerships within communities by promoting a dialog on the importance and potential of telecommunications to Nebraska's economy.

The Nebraska Electronic Main Street Program is coordinated by the Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI).

Program Impact:

422 business have been reached by the NE Electronic Main Street Program since the conNEcting Nebraska Technology team was created in 1999. During that time impacts have ranged greatly. Over 90% of the participants have ranked the class as very good to

excellent and would recommend the course to others.

Below are listed the impacts mentioned by the businesses: businesses designing their own web pages, increased use of metatags and keywords, better able to find suppliers online, businesses realizing that they own their “domain name” - not the WebMaster, as a result of taking the class - businesses plan on increasing the amount of business they do on-line, and developed a network of people to help them make better informed decisions about their website, Several businesses plan on learning more about developing webpages and creating and managing their own site. Those already doing business on-line report less operational costs due to less paper being handled and printing costs are passed to the customer.

Fees: - \$59.00 per participant

Additional Resources:

Additionally, the conNEcting Team has a representative on the ECOP National Rural Economic Development Task Force in which we are apart of a pilot e-Commerce Initiative in partnership with the Mississippi State University and New Mexico State University. Because of those efforts we were able to coordinate and provide day long workshops on Electronic Retailing - Selling on the Internet. See attached sheet for evaluation results of the four workshops.

A Business Survey was completed by 585 business owners - a 47% return rate, in the fall of 2003 and the results are documented in the publication compiled by the Center for Applied Rural Innovations.

Topics identified by NE Businesses in the survey were:

- using the Internet for customer information/support (53%)
- marketing their web site (53%)
- web application development/hosting (52%)
- how to find vendors/suppliers through the Internet (52%)
- setting up a customer communication center (41%)
- establishing a secure payment system (40%)
- online banking and other financial services (40%)
- setting up an online ordering system (38%)
- establishing a merchant account and processing online payments (36%)
- using the Internet for inventory control/management (31%).

In general, the past program participants are more likely than the random sample of businesses to be interested in learning these topics.

Most of the respondents report being either very or somewhat comfortable with the various delivery options for training: one all day workshop (69%), a series of 3 - 4 hour sessions over a period of several weeks (66%) and online courses (62%).

Weekday evenings, weekday afternoons and weekday mornings are the best days and

times for the businesses to participate in training courses or workshops.

Using the topics identified by NE businesses, the conNEcting team has contracted with three Nebraska curriculum developers to write the Advanced e-Commerce Curriculum. The draft will be completed by June 1 and ready for pilot in the fall of 2004.

Partners:

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REAP's Basic E-Commerce Course

www.cfra.org/reap

Program Description:

The REAP Women's Business Center is cooperating with Connecting Nebraska and the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service to deliver this eCommerce training across Nebraska. We utilize the same curriculum from the University of Minnesota, Electronic Mainstreet and we have tried to offer the course when and where there is a need expressed by the community or REAP small business associations across Nebraska.

The four-part course is generally conducted in a local computer lab and usually runs from 6:30 to 9:30 PM. The course curriculum is designed to guide participants through an exploration of eCommerce issues that they might consider for their small business.

The focus of this exploratory eCommerce course is designed to help businesses formulate a plan to utilize the Internet as a positive tool for their business. In session one, participants learn how to critique electronic commerce websites. In session two, the course includes the decision factors on determining the need for a website and identifying options for website hosts. The course continues with a discussion on promotion of websites and concludes the last night with identification of components of a business plan for eCommerce. A few of our instructors have included some web site design information. Of course we try to meet the needs of the group as much as possible.

Ten people have been trained as instructors of the course for REAP. Seven have actually taught the class so far.

Program Impact / Evaluation Results:

Written evaluations back from the courses have indicated that much was learned and participants valued the training very positively. We have not done specific follow up to see how they have used the training. Over the past 2+ years of making this course available REAP has sponsored 11 eCommerce courses with approximately 72 participants completing the course. Several were scheduled but were not conducted due to insufficient enrollment.

Fees: We have charged the same as Connecting Nebraska. Was \$49 and this year raised to \$59. Covers Electronic MainStreet manual cost.

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Tom Osborne E-Commerce/Entrepreneur Workshops

www.house.gov/osborne

Program Description:

These programs have been designed to be half-day ‘best practices’ events. Local success stories and service providers participate, as well as private, public, and government partners. These programs have been in cooperation with RC&D offices, UNL Cooperative Extension, local chambers of commerce, etc.

Program Impact:

Evaluations have been very positive. Tom’s office has hosted events in at least nine communities, and has participated in at least fifteen others. The office has also been contacted by over a dozen additional communities wanting events to be held in their town.

Fee Charged to Participants: None.

Additional Resources:

- Rural Economic Development Handbook and Resource Guide
- Entrepreneurship Handbook and Resource Guide

Both available at www.house.gov/osborne . Hard copies are also available of the Entrepreneurship Handbook.

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Department of Economic Development E-Commerce Training

<http://assist.neded.org/startup>

Program Description:

The Department of Economic Development will offer e-commerce training upon request in communities that have participated in the Business Expansion

Program Impact:

To date, e-commerce training has been provided by the Department in Ogallala to six businesses.

Fees: None.

Additional Resources:

E-commerce development resources are available at <http://assist.neded.org/#startup>. For more information, contact Steve Williams, swilliams@neded.org, 471-3782, 800-426-6205

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Nebraska Business Development Center E-Commerce Training

<http://nbdc.unomaha.edu>

Program Description:

Nebraska Business Development Center offers a robust schedule of e-commerce training. The workshops may be taken as an Endorsement Program, Certificate Program or individually. An endorsement requires workshop attendance, assignments and testing, and is recorded on a UNO transcript as a non-credit program. A Certificate is the same program without testing and it is not recorded on a UNO transcript. All of the workshops are taught using hands-on exercises.

We also assist individual clients in designing and building their business websites. After the website is live, the customer is coached on how to maintain the site or we maintain it for them.

- **Web Publisher Endorsement** **Fee - \$1899**
 You will learn how to design and build websites from scratch using HTML, Cascading Style Sheets and a Web editor such as FrontPage or Dreamweaver. Design principles and navigational structure are also discussed at length. This is a 10-day program.
- **Web Graphics Endorsement** **Fee - \$2499**
 You will learn how to build and implement dazzling Web graphics on your website using industry-standard technologies, Macromedia and Adobe. This is a 12-day program.
- **Web Developer Endorsement** **Fee - \$2999**
 Build your skills through a full range of architecture, database and scripting workshops. This is a 13-day program.
- **Enterprise Java Developer Endorsement** **Fee - \$3199**
 Learn the principles of object-oriented applications. Master the concepts and build robust, professional web applications using the most sophisticated features of Java. This is a 12-day program.

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Other Resources

NU Skills(tm) Online Seminars

nuskills.unl.edu

Program Description:

The University of Nebraska has developed NU Skills online seminars. NU Skills allows the University to deliver live, interactive educational programs or meetings directly to participants' desks without special hardware or software.

In addition to offering business seminars, NU Skills provides hosting services to any organization wishing to present online programs. In February 2004, NU Skills hosted an e-commerce seminar presented by UNL Cooperative Extension. NU Skills presenters can use slide presentations, documents, applications and websites for teaching/facilitating.

System requirements for presenters and participants include a 56K or faster Internet connection, Internet Explorer or Netscape and a phone.

Contact Information:

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